

In the Claims:

1. (currently amended) An instrument for cutting tissue guided along a guide wire comprising:

a proximal end having a housing;

a shaft extending from said housing to a distal end of the instrument, said shaft having at said distal end an opening to outside of said instrument;

a guide tube extending from said shaft through said opening of said shaft in which said guide tube comprises an outer tubular surface, two ends, and an opening extending through said guide tube between said ends of said guide tube;

a path through at least said opening of said guide tube for extending a guide wire; and

means for longitudinally cutting tissue guided along the outer tubular surface of ~~along a path defined by~~ said guide tube through said opening of said shaft, said means comprising a blade extendable and retractable through said opening of said shaft to cut tissue when present outside of said instrument.

2. (original) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said longitudinally cutting means provides a cut of a predetermined depth and width.

3. (original) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said longitudinally cutting means further comprises means at said housing coupled to said blade for remotely controlling the extending and retracting of said blade at said distal end.

4. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said longitudinally cutting means further comprises a blade shuttle attached to said blade having a longitudinal channel within which said guide tube is located to linearly guide said blade shuttle travel along the outer surface of said guide tube at said distal end.

5. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 4 wherein said longitudinally cutting means further comprises:

a pivotal actuator member at said housing; and

one or more drive rods or tubes each having a distal end coupled to said blade shuttle and a proximal end coupled to said actuator member in which pivoting of said actuator member controls said extending and retracting ~~retraction~~ of said blade shuttle.

6. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein when a guide wire is extended along said path ~~for extending said guide wire~~, said distal end is located adjacent tissue along said guide wire to be cut when said blade is extended.

7. (original) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said shaft is extendable through an endoscope.

8. (currently amended) An instrument for cutting tissue guided along a guide wire comprising:

a shaft extending to a distal end of the instrument, said shaft having an opening at said distal end;

a guide tube at said distal end having an outer tubular surface which extends through said opening in which ~~and receives~~ a guide wire is receivable through said guide tube; and

a movable blade shuttle ~~having a blade, said blade shuttle comprising~~ having a blade, and a longitudinal channel receiving ~~for~~ said guide tube to enable said guide tube to linearly guide said blade shuttle travel riding along the outer tubular surface of said guide tube in said channel ~~at said distal end~~ when said blade shuttle is extended from said opening or retracted back through said opening, wherein said guide tube extends through said opening of the shaft beyond said shaft and said blade shuttle; when retracted, to define a path along which said blade shuttle is extendable and retractable.

9. (original) The instrument according to Claim 8 further comprising a housing coupled to said shaft and means for remotely controlling movement of said blade shuttle at said distal end to cut tissue.

10. (original) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said shaft is rigid or at least partially flexible.

11-14. (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said shaft is positionable in a tubular tissue structure through which said distal end of the instrument is guided by the guide wire along the path for extending said guide wire, and said blade when extended provides the longitudinally incision along a narrowed region of the tubular structure.

16. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said guide tube is non-movable stationary with respect to said shaft.

17. (previously presented) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said path for extending the guide wire extends through said housing, said shaft, and said guide tube, and then exits said guide tube.

18. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 1 wherein said blade is external of said guide tube and has a single longitudinally oriented sharp edge, and said means disposes said blade to extend longitudinally along the outer tubular surface of said path defined by said guide tube through said opening of said shaft to enable said edge of said blade to make a longitudinal incision in tissue when present outside of said instrument ~~cut tissue when said distal end is adjacent the tissue to be cut.~~

19. (cancelled)

20. (previously presented) The instrument according to Claim 8 further comprising:  
a housing coupled to an end of said shaft opposite said distal end;  
a pivotal actuator member at said housing; and  
one or more drive rods or tubes each having a distal end coupled to said blade shuttle and a proximal end coupled to said actuator member in which pivoting of said actuator member controls said extending and retraction of said blade shuttle via said opening.

21. (previously presented) The instrument according to Claim 8 further comprising a pathway through at least said guide tube and said shaft for extending a guide wire.

22. (previously presented) The instrument according to Claim 21 wherein said guide wire is extended along said pathway to locate said distal end of the instrument adjacent the tissue to be cut by said blade, and said blade shuttle is extended and retracted along said path to enable said blade to extend outside said instrument to cut said tissue.

23. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 8 wherein said guide tube is non-movable stationary with respect to said shaft.

24. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 8 wherein said blade is external of said guide tube and has a sharp edge, and said blade shuttle ~~is disposed to~~ longitudinally travels ~~extend along the outer tubular surface of said path defined by~~ said guide tube through said opening of said shaft to enable said edge of said blade to make a longitudinal incision in tissue when present outside of said instrument ~~to cut tissue when said distal end is adjacent the tissue to be cut.~~

25. (currently amended) An instrument for guided cutting of tissue comprising:  
a ~~distal end~~;  
a shaft having an ~~extending to said distal end~~;  
a blade at said ~~distal~~ end movable to extend out of said shaft to cut tissue when present outside of said instrument; and  
a ~~guide~~ member which guides movement of said blade at said ~~distal~~ end out of said shaft, wherein said member is non-movable with respect to said shaft, and said blade is movable with respect to said member.

26. (currently amended) The instrument according to Claim 25 wherein said ~~guide~~ member has an outer surface and said blade is guided along said outer surface of member outside said shaft ~~is tubular for enabling a guide wire to extend there through.~~

27. (previously presented) The instrument according to Claim 25 wherein said shaft has an opening to outside of said instrument, and said blade extends out of said shaft through said opening to cut tissue outside of said instrument which neighbors said guide member.

28. (new) The instrument according to Claim 26 wherein said outer surface of said member represents a tubular outer surface.

29. (new) The instrument according to Claim 25 further comprising a shuttle external of said guide tube having a slot retaining said blade, in which said shuttle rides along said member to extend said blade from said shaft and to retract said blade back into said shaft.

30. (new) The instrument according to Claim 25 wherein said member has a passage for extending a guide wire through said member.

31. (new) An instrument for guided cutting of tissue comprising:

a shaft having an end;

a blade at said end movable to extend out of said shaft to cut tissue when present outside of said instrument; and

a guide member which guides movement of said blade at said end out of said shaft, wherein said blade is located external of said guide member, and said blade is movable with respect to said guide member.